

Joint Statement by the EU Special Representative Michael Sahlin and the United States
Chargé d’Affaires Paul Wohlers on the Draft Law on the Use of Community Symbols

27 May, 2005

“The Office of the EU Special Representative and the U.S. Embassy welcome the government's draft law on the use of community symbols as a significant step toward completing the legislative requirements of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

The government has consulted with us, as Framework Agreement signatories, on various aspects of the draft law. After review of the draft legislation, we believe that it reflects a constructive spirit of political cooperation and is fully consistent with both the spirit and the letter of the Framework Agreement. We further note that the draft law fully respects and preserves the integrity of the state flag in defining the official use of community symbols.

We applaud the parties’ willingness to compromise on a difficult issue in the name of the common goals of the state. We welcome the government's call for open discussion of the law, in the parliament and in the public. We urge all parties to conduct those discussions in a spirit of constructive debate, keeping in mind their general political commitment to support full implementation of the Framework Agreement as a key move toward the country's Euro-Atlantic integration goals. Parliamentary adoption of the law would demonstrate a move away from ethnic crisis and a significant step toward the Euro-Atlantic community.”

Press enquiries should be referred to:

*The Office of the Special Representative of the European Union in Skopje,
tel: + 389 (2) 3222 089, mobile: + 389 (0) 70 358 031, or*

The Public Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, tel: + 389 (2) 3116 180

###